

Proposal to Establish a West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group

Report number:	CAB/WS/21/015	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	16 March 2021
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Decisions Plan: The decision made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: All West Suffolk Wards

Recommendation: It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1. Agrees to the establishment of a Local Plan Working Group; and**
- 2. Approves the Terms of Reference for the Local Plan Working Group, attached as Appendix A, to Report Number CAB/WS/21/015.**

1. Background / Context

- 1.1 The Local Plan is important in supporting delivery of our Strategic priorities and essential for the continuation of an effective planning service. In addition, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, (2004), requires Local Planning authorities to prepare and keep an up-to-date Local Plan.

West Suffolk Council is preparing a new Local Plan that once complete will replace the various documents which together form the existing Development Plan for West Suffolk:

- Former Forest Heath area Core Strategy (2010)
- Former St Edmundsbury area Core Strategy (2010).
- Former Forest Heath area Single Issue review (SIR) (2019)
- Joint Development Management Policies Document (2015)
- Former Edmundsbury area 'Vision' Site Allocation documents (2014)
- Former Forest Heath area Sites Allocation Local Plan (2019)

2. Proposals

- 2.1 To shape and form a leadership/political process to develop and progress the West Suffolk Local Plan, it is proposed to create a Local Plan Working Group to deal with the detail of policy development, monitoring and best practice covering the Local Plan preparation, public engagement, and responses to consultations. The terms of reference are attached at Appendix A.
- 2.2 The new Local Plan will be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and informed by local evidence relating to West Suffolk and the wider area.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the review group would be formed of 10 members, on a politically balanced basis. The group shall be chaired by the Local Plan Development and Delivery Portfolio Holder and will elect a vice-chair from amongst its membership. The Group will have no decision-making powers itself, as Local Plan consultations and final document will be approved by Council directly, on the recommendation of Cabinet. Group leaders will be requested to nominate members to the group on a collaborative basis in order to support ensuring the group has a good representation across the geography of West Suffolk.

3. Alternative options

- 3.1 The alternative option would be to test and refine site and policy options as well as draft policy and the Local Plan using Cabinet or Council, with the option for Overview and Scrutiny inspection. However, this is often a very detailed, technical task and can be more effectively undertaken by a small working group to explore options, key issues, and test policy/site options

in detail. Establishing a Local Plan Working Group also allows Members to lead and develop the Local Plan throughout its preparation process.

4. Consultation and engagement

4.1 None.

5. Risks associated with the proposals

5.1 There are no specific risks arising from this paper.

6. Implications arising from the proposals

6.1 There are no specific implications arising from this proposal.

7. Appendices referenced in this report

7.1 Appendix A: Terms of Reference for the West Suffolk Local Plan Working Group (WSPWG)

8. Background documents associated with this report

8.1 None.